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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
AID-05 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /086 W
----------019219 041810Z /45
R 041400Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2143

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 CARACAS 4074

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PINS PGOV VE
SUBJECT: CAMPAIGN '78: THE FIRST FURLONG

REF: (A) CARACAS 2960, (B) CARACAS 2574, (C) CARACAS A-19,
(D) CARACAS A-17, (E) CARACAS A-14, (F) CARACAS 1853

SUMMARY: ONE MONTH INTO THE OFFICIAL PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, AD CANDIDATE PINERUA ORDAZ HAS DRAWN EVEN WITH COPEI'S HERRERA CAMPINS IN ONE PUBLIC OPINION POLL, AND HIS MASSIVE APRIL 1-2 CAMPAIGN KICKOFF EXTRAVAGANZA DEMONSTRATED THAT THE "BIG WHITE (ADECO) MACHINE" IS WELL OILED AND PARTY SPLITS PAPERED OVER, AT LEAST FOR THE DURATION. HERRERA CAMPINS HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO ESTABLISH A FIRM IMAGE AND CONTINUES TO LAMBASTE PINERUA AND THE PEREZ ADMINISTRATION MESS. BOTH CANDIDATES AND THEIR PARTY ORGANIZATIONS HAVE CONCENTRATED THEIR FIRE ON EACH OTHER, AND NEITHER HAS YET ANNOUNCED A COHERENT PROGRAM. THE ATTRACTIVE MEDIA WIZARD, DIEGO ARRIA, WAITS IN THE WINGS TO LAUNCH HIS OWN INDEPENDENT "TECHNOCRATIC" EFFORT IN EARLY MAY, WITHOUT A STRONG ORGANIZATION, BUT WITH THE BACKING OF MAJOR MEDIA FIGURES. ALL THREE CANDIDATES ARE ALSO USING US ELECTION ADVISORS, THUS EMPHASIZING THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA. MOST SPECULATION AT THE MOMENT CENTERS ON THE ARRIA CAMPAIGN AND TO WHAT EXTENT ARRIA WILL HURT EITHER OR BOTH MAJOR PARTIES. PRESENT ODDS STILL FAVOR PINERUA, CONFIDENTIAL

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BUT ARRIA'S PRESENCE COULD MAKE THE DIFFERENCE, AS COULD OVER-CONFIDENCE IN THE AD CAMP. IN SUM,IT'S TOO EARLY FOR PREDICTIONS, BUT THE CAMPAIGN IS GOING TO BE CLOSE, ROUGH, AND SURPRISING. END SUMMARY.

1. THE BIG WHITE (ADECO) MACHINE.

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PINERUA'S BLITZ OF NINETEEN CITIES IN TWO DAYS, APRIL 1-2,
(CARACAS 3236) FOLLOWED BY A MASSIVE RALLY IN DONWTOWN
CARACAS APRIL 13 FORMALLY OPENED THE AD CAMPAIGN. THOUSANDS
OF AD MILITANTS TURNED OUT, AND AD OFFICIALS PRIVATELY AND
PUBLICLY WERE ELATED THAT THE "BIG WHITE MACHINE" IS NOW
RUNNING SMOOTHLY AND IN HIGH GEAR. WHILE THE CANDIDATE SAID
LITTLE NEW, THE MASSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORT BY THE PARTY
APPARATUS PROVED IT HAS THE MONEY AND THE MUSCLE TO TURN OUT
THE CROWDS AND GAVE THE PINERUA CAMPAIGN A BADLY NEEDED
BOOST, BOTH IN TERMS OF NATIONAL PUBLICITY AND INTERNATL SELF-
CONFIDENCE. THE CANDIDATE HIMSELF CONTINUED PRESENTING HIS
LITANY OF LOW KEY REFORMS EMPHASIZING HIS CATCHY NEW CAMPAIGN
SLOGAN OF "CAPACITY AND FIRMNESS TO GOVERN" BY PROMISING
COLOR TV, A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO GRANT GREATER POLITICAL
RIGHTS TO NATURALIZED CITIZENS, BETTER AND MORE USEFUL (TECHNICAL)
EDUCATION, LIMITING THE AUTONOMY OF UNIVERSITIES (WITHOUT
STIFLING ACADEMIC FREEDOM), ORDER AND SECURITY, AS WELL
AS THE MOST TELLING POINTS OF CONTINUED PROSPERITY AND FULL
EMPLOYMENT. HE HAS ALSO STRESSED THE NEED FOR MORE OPEN EXCHANGE
OF IDEAS, PARTICULARLY MORE AGGGRESSIVE INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING
AND LESS
GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED NEWSCASTS.

2. JUST AS IMPORTANT, PINERUA HAS OPENLY PRAISED THE PEREZ
ADMINISTRATION AND DEEMPHASIZED SOMEWHAT THE THEMES OF CLEAN
GOVERNMENT, AND LESS AMBITIOUS PROJECTS, BOTH IMPLICIT REBUKES OF
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PEREZ. PEREZ, FOR HIS PART, HAS TRIED TO MAINTAIN HIMSELF
OFFICIALLY ABOVE THE FRAY, ALTHOUGH A BLISTERING CALDERA
SPEECH ACCUSING PEREZ OF SQUANDERING THE NATION'S WEALTH
(CARACAS 3529) CAUSED PEREZ TO RETORT SHARPLY THAT CALDERA
HAS EXCEEDED THE BOUNDS OF GOOD TASTE. WHIEL THE UNDERLYING
COMPETITION BETWEEN PEREZ ON THE ONE HAND, AND BETANCOURT,
PINERUA AND THE PARTY REGULARS ON THE OTHER HAS BY NO MEANS
BEEN ELIMINATED, BOTH FACTIONS SEEM TO HAVE FINALLY PUT ASIDE
THEIR DIFFERENCES FOR THE GOOD OF THE CAMPAIGN.

3. AD OFFICIALS TELL US PRIVATELY THAT THE NEXT POLL WILL
DEMONSTRATE CONCLUSIVELY THAT PINERUA WILL BE AHEAD OF
HERRERA AND THEY BELIEVE HE WILL STAY THERE. THEY ALSO MAIN-
TAIN THAT THE MOST TELLING POINT IN PINERUA'S FAVOR IS
PROSPERITY, THE RELATIVE WEALTH OF VENEZUELA, AND LOW
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE WILL, ACCORDING TO THEM, BRING THE MASS
OF LOWER CLASS VOTERS (THE MAINSTAY OF AD) INTO THE PINERUA
CAMP, NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL SERVICES,
CRIME AND INFLATION. IF TRUE, PINERUA HAS LITTLE TO WORRY
ABOUT.

4. COPEYANO GREEN- IT'S NOT EASY BEING GREEN OR THE BEST

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DEFENSE IS ALL OFFENSE.

AFTER A MASSIVE CAMPAIGN KICKOFF RALLY IN VALENCIA, LUIS HERRERA CAMPINS HAS BEEN BARNSTROMING THE COUNTRY STRESSING VIRTUALLY THE SAME THEMES AS PINERUA, EDUCATION, INTEGRITY, PRODUCTION, CRIME PREVENTION. HITTING HARD AT PINERUA'S TIES TO THE PEREZ ADMINISTRATION, HERRERA IN PARTICULAR HAS MOCKED HIS OPPONENT'S EARLY EFFORTS TO DISTANCE HIMSELF FROM PEREZ. THE MOST TELLING BLOW TO DATE HAS BEEN HERRERA'S DESCRIPTION OF A GOV EXHIBIT IN DOWNTOWN CARACAS EXTOLLING THE PEREZ YEARS AS "KING KONG'S CAGE." THIS BROUGHT HOWLS OF GLEE FROM THE COPEYANO CAMP, AND FEEBLE COUNTERATTACKS FROM THE ADECOS. HERRERA APPEALS HAVE BEEN EMOTIONAL, AND POPULIST IN STYLE, AND HE LIKE PINERUA, HAS SHIFTED HIS
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STANCE SLIGHTLY. LESS DISCUSSION OF THE "PROMOTOR STATE" AND EVEN LESS ABOUT PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY, AND MORE EMPHASIS ON PRACTICAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS. HERRERA, IN FACT, HAS OFFICIALLY DROPPED THE IDEA OF "COMMUNITARIAN PROPERTY" FROM HIS PROGRAM, ALTHOUGH MAINTAINING THAT THE IDEA HAS BEEN UNFORTUNATELY CONFUSED WITH COMMUNISM. HERRERA STATES THAT, ON THE CONTRARY, THE IDEA IS AN AFFIRMATION OF THE VALUE OF THE HUMAN INDIVIDUAL AND A DENIAL OF STATE AUTHORITARIANISM.

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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----------019339 041813Z /45
R 041400Z MAY 78
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 CARACAS 4074

BUT THIS AMBIGUITY COULD AUGUR ILL FOR THE

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COPEYANO CANDIDATE FOR SUCH IDEAS HAVE LONG BEEN THE HALLMARK
OF VENEZUELAN SOCIAL CHRISTIAN THOUGHT. HIS ESPOUSAL OF
SUCH AN IDEA, BUT NOT WITHIN THE OFFICIAL PARTY PLATFORM,
CLEARLY IMPLIES THAT IT IS SIMPLY TOO SENSITIVE TO FORMALLY
PROCLAIM, YET HERRERA IS NOT WILLING TO COMPLETELY THE CONCEPT.
HENCE THE FEELING AMONG OBSERVERS THAT HERRERA IS FUZZY ON
ISSUES, PARTICULARY THOSE WITH IDEOLOGICAL CONTENT. THE
COPEYANOS, IN FACT, HAVE PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED THEIR PROGRAM
WILL BE PUT FORWARD PIECEMEAL IN JULY, A STRATEGY WHICH
FITS WITH THEIR OVERALL EFFORT TO ATTACK, ATTACK, ATTACK,
IN THE EARLY MONTHS, BOTH TO ESTABLISH HERRERA AS A VIABLE
LEADER, AND ALSO TO PROVIDE AD WITH LESS TIME TO MAKE
COUNTER-ARGUMENTS. THERE IS ALSO SOME CONCERN THAT HERRERA'S
UNDEFINED IMAGE HAS CAUSED THE COPEYANO CANDIDATE TO FADE
SOMEWHAT FROM THE PUBLIC MIND. THERE ARE CURRENTLY MANY
JABS ABOUT PINERUA WHICH HUMANIZE HIS SOMEWHAT DOUR PERSONALBITY,
WHILE THERE ARE VIRTUALLY NO JOKES ABOUT HERRERA. TO COPEI'S
CHAGRIN, HE SEEMS ALMOST TOO BLAND TO BE EASILY CHARACTERIZED BY
POPULAR HUMOR.

5. CONTRARY TO THE EARLY STAGES OF THE PRE-CAMPAIGN, HOWEVER,
COPEI IN RECENT WEEKS HAS BEEN WEAKENED SOMEWHAT BY PUBLIC
AWARENESS OF DISSENSION WITHIN ITS RANKS. HERRERA'S
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CAMPAIGN MANAGER, MONTES DE OCA, AND THE PARTY SECRETARY
GENERAL , PEDRO PABLO AGUILAR HAVE NOT SEEN EYE TO EYE ON
VARIOUS MATTERS CONCERNING CAMPAIGN POSTS WHICH HAS
EMPHASIZED THE CLEAVAGE BETWEEN THE CALDERA FRACTION,
HERRERA'S OWN SUPPORTERS, AND THE AMBITIOUS AGUILAR. FURTHER,
AN ECCENTRIC HERRERA SUPPORTER IN ZULIA, SENATOR CIRO
PEROZO ZAMBRANO RECENTLY RESIGNED FROM THE PARTY IN A HUFF
AND ACCUSED A FORMER ZULIA GOVERNOR AND COPEI COLLEAGUE OF
FRAUD. ALLEGEDLY PEROZO HAD BEEN PASSED OVER BY HERRERA
WHEN THE LATTER CHOSE HIS CAMPAIGN TEAM FOR ZULIA. FINALLY,
JOSE MIGUEL UZCATEGUI, THE COPEYANO LABOR REPRESENTATIVE ON
THE BOARD OF THE CENTRAL BANK HAS BEEN NAMED AS A POSSIBLE
ACCOMPLICE IN A COMPLICATED SWINDLE INVOLVING PHONY EXPORT
BONUS APPLICATIONS. THIS SCANDAL,WHICH MAY HAVE BROADER
RAMIFICATIONS, HAS DONE LITTLE TO IMPROVE COPEI'S CLAIM
THAT IT CAN "FIX THINGS." THE NATIONAL LABOR FEDERATION
DROPPED UZCATEGUI FROM HIS POSITION MAY 2.

6. THESE DEVELOPMENTS DO NOT YET IMPLY THAT COPEI RISKS
A DEBILITATING INTERNAL DIVISION FOR THE COPEYANOS REALIZE,
JUST AS THEIR AD COUNTERPARTS DO, THAT PARTY UNITY IS
ESSENTIAL IF THEIR CANDIDATE IS TO HAVE A REAL CHANCE TO
BECOME PRESIDENT. AND, IN FACT, PRESIDENT CALDERA HAS GIVEN
THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT COPEYANO ADDRESS OF THE CAMPAIGN,
MAKING A MAJOR DEFENSE IN CONGRESS OF HIS OWN ADMINISTRATION

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AND ACCUSING PRESIDENT PEREZ AND HIS GOVERNMENT OF
MONUMENTAL PARTISANSHIP AND WASTE (CARACAS 3529). WHILE IT
REMAINS PROBLEMATIC WHETHER CALDERA WILL GO OUT ON THE
HUSTINGS FOR HIS PARTY'S CANDIDATE TO THE EXTENT BETANCOURT
WILL FOR HIS, CALDERA HAS DONE AND SAID NOTHING TO UNDERMINE
THE HERRERA CANDIDACY.

7. ASIDE FROM THE THREAT OF ARRIA'S CANDIDACY HERRERA'S
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MAJOR PROBLEM HAS BEEN AN INABILITY TO PROJECT HIMSELF AS A
CANDIDATE WITH CLEAR AND PRECISE IDEAS ABOUT HOW HE WOULD
GOVERN. TO ATTRACT THE SIZEABLE NUMBER OF INDEPENDENT VOTERS
NEEDED FOR VICGORY TO THE GREEN PARTY BANNER, COPEI AND
HERRERA WILL HAVE TO PROVIDE A SENSE OF FIRM LEADERSHIP AND
DIRECTION THAT TO DATE HAVE BEEN LACKING. THIS MAY BE IN
PART DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE COPEI PLATFORM IS YET TO BE
ENUNCIATED, AND ALSO THAT HERRERA HIMSELF HAS NO PRACTICAL
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE WHICH WOULD HELP HIM PROJECT A
SENSE OF LEADERSHIP AT THE HELM. FINALLY, IT SHOULD BE
NOTED THAT HERRERA UNDOBUTEDLY REALIZES THESE CONSTRAINTS,
AS DO HIS CAMPAIGN MANAGERS. THUS WHILE AT THE MOMENT THE
MOMENTUM OF THE CAPIGN HAS SWUNG TOWARD AD, HERRERA
REMAINS A DISTINCT CONTENDER, PARTICULARLY IF THE NEW AND
DISAFFECTED VOTERS DECIDE THAT AD'S CANDIDATE REPRESENTS A
DISCREDITED PAST AND THAT COPEI IS THE ONLY REAL ALTERNATIVE.

8. THE THIRD FORCE - ARRIA AS MEDIA WIZARD
THE EMBASSY HAS REPORTED EXTENSIVELY ON DIEGO ARRIA'S
MOTIVATION FOR RUNNING AN INDEPENDENT CAMPAIGN, AS WELL AS
THEVARIOUS CONSPIRACY THEORIES CIRCULATED IN CARACAS ABOUT
WHY HE HAS DECIDED TO DO SO (CARACAS 3748, 2960, 2574).
IN ANY CASE, ARRIA PLANS TO ANNOUNCE HIS CANDIDACY BY MID-
MAY, ANDHAS ALREADY OBTAINED THE SUPPORT OF MAJOR NEWSPAPER
PUBLISHERS, DE ARMAS, CAPRILES AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT,
NUNEZ OF "EL UNIVERSAL." HE HAS HIRED LOCAL AND US MEDIA
ADVISORS AND SPENT SEVERAL WEEKS RECENTLY IN THE US SEEKING
MEDIA ADVISE AND POSSIBLY FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

9. ARRIA'S CANDIDACY IS A SERIOUS BID, AND DOES CHANGE THE
POLITICAL COMPLEXION OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN FOR TWO
BASIC REASONS : (A) HE WILL USE PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA
ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY, THEREBY EMPAHSIZING THE "NEW POLITICS"
OF THE MEDIA AS OPPOSED TO MASS PARTY ORGANIZATION AND POPULAR
RALLIES; (B) HE HAS A POTENTIAL APPEAL TO BOTH NEW VOTERS
AND TO THE DISAFFECTED, THE GREAT UNKNOWN QUANTITY IN THIS
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ELECTION. OUT OF APPROXIMATELY 6 MILLION VOTERS, SOME SERIOUS
POLITICAL COMMENTATORS BELIEVE THAT HE COULD ATTRACT AS MUCH
AS 10 TO 20 PRCENT OF THE VOTE IF HIS CAMPAIGN CATKHES
HOLD. IN GENERAL, HE WILL RUN A NON-IDEOLOGICAL TECHNOCRATIC
CAMPAIGN,EMPHASIZING PUBLIC WORKS, NON-PARTISANSHIP AND,
IN FACT, CONTINUITY FROM WHAT HE DID AS GOVERNOR OF THE
FEDERAL DISTRICT, BUT ON A NATIONAL SCALE. ARRIA PLANS TO
ORGANIZE HIS OWN MOVEMENT, "COMMON CAUSE-DIEGO ARRIA."
THE NAME, SIMILAR TO THAT USE BY ARRIA IN THE PEREZ CAMPAIGN
IS MEAN TO SYMBOLIZE THE NEED FOR COMMON ACTION ON THE PART

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R 041400Z MAY 78
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OF CITIZENS TO RESOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS. THEY CANNOT RELY
SOLELY ON THE PWOERS OF THE STATE, BUT MUST CONTRIBUTE
TO PUTTING THINGS RIGHT. HE WILL PUT UP TECHNICAL FIGURES
ON HIS PARTY SLATE FOR CONGRESS TO STRESS THE NONPARTISAM
NATURE OF HIS MIDDLE OF THE ROAD CAMPAIGN. PRIVATELY,
NEITHER AD NOR COPEI ACKNOWLEDGE ARRIA AS A THREAT, BUT BOTH
SAY IN THE NEXT BREATH THAT HE IS A STALKING HORSE FOR THE
OTHER PARTY, THUS INDICATING THAT BOTH ARE QUITE CONCERNED
AS TO WHICH PARTY WILLBE HURT MOST BY ARRIA. NOBODY KNOWS
THE ANSWER TO THAT: ARRIA HIMSELF TELLS US THAT IF HE DOES
ONLY MODERATELY WELL, HE WILL HARM HERRERA MOST BY PULLING
AWAY MIDDLE CLASS COPEYANO VOTERS. HOWEVER, IF HIS MEDIA
APPROACH ALSO APPEALS TO THE POOR LOWER CLASS HE COULD ALSO
GARNER POTENTIAL AD VOTERS. GIVEN HIS IMAGE, PROGRAMS, AND
LIFESTYLE, HE UNLIKELY TO ATTRACT THE LEFTIST VOTE.
ALMOST NO ONE BELIEVES ARRIA CAN WIN NOW, BUT, ON THE OTHER
HAND, NO ONE IS PREDICTING FLATLY THAT HIS "COMMON CAUSE"

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MEANS HIS POLITICAL DEMISE EITHER. ONE THING IS A NEAR
CERTAINITY; ARRIA WILL BE VERY CAREFUL ABOUT HIS RELATIONSHIP
WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ. HAVING BEEN A PEREZ PROTEGE FOR FOUR
YEARS, HE WOULD LOSE ALL CREDIBILITY BY ATTACKING HIS MENTOR,
AND, IN ANY CASE, ARRIA MAINTAINS THAT HE AND PEREZ REMAIN
THE BEST OF FRIENDS. IN FACT, A RUMOR TO THE EFFECT THAT
PEREZ SECRETIVELY BACKS HIS INDEPENDENT BID HAS GAINED
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CURRENCY. THE EMBASSY IS CONVINCED HAT THIS IS NOT THE
CASE FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS. FIRST, A GOOD FRIEND OF
PEREZ HAS TOLD US THE PRESIDENT WAS GENUINELY ANNOYED
WHEN HE HEARD THE RUMOR. SECOND, WHATEVER PEREZ' DIFFERENCES
WITH BETANCOURT AND PINERUA, HE IS A PARTY MAN FIRST AND
LAST. THIRD, HIS OBJECTIVE IS TO TAKE OVER THE AD PARTY.
TO SUPPORT RRIA'S BID, CLANDESTINELY OR OTHERWISE, WOULD
DESTROY PERMANENTLY PEREZ' OWN POWER BASE WITHIN THE PARTY.
THE EMBASSY BELIEVES ARRIA IS THE SOURCE OF THIS RUMOR. OVER THE
LAST WEEKEND, FOR THE FIRST TIME, HERRERA DIRECTLY ATTACKED
ARRIA, CLAIMING THAT HE IS PEREZ' VIRTUAL CANDIDATE,
THE "GOVERNMENT" CANDIADATE. PEREZ IMMEDIATELY CATEGORICALLY
DENIED THE ASSERTION, BUT THE COPEYANOS CLEARLY BELIEVE IT
IS TO THEIR ADVANTAGE TO STATE THAT ARRIA IS PEREZ' STALING
HORSE. THEY HAVE TOLD US AS MUCH PRIVATELY. WHETHER THIS
STRATEGY WILL WORK REMAINS TO BE SEEN, FOR IN THE FIRST
INSTANCE IT MEARELY GIVES ARRIA FREE PUBLICITY, EVEN BEFORE
HE OFFICIALLY STARTS HIS CAMPAIGN.

10. US ELECTION ADVISORS -VENEZUELA AS COPY-CAT.
AD, COPEI AND ARRIA HAVE HIRED US ELECTION EXPERTS: AD-
JOE NAPOLITAN AND CILTON WHITE; COPEI-DAVID GARTH; ARRIA-
PAT CADELL AND DIERDORF. WHILE THE OTHER PARTIES HAVE
CRITICIZED THE USE OF SUCH ADVISORS AS DIRECT INTERFERENCE IN
VENEZUELA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS, THE TWO BIG PARTIES AND ARRIA
BELIEVE THEY ARE ESSENTIAL TO ANY MODERN CAMPAIGN. BOTH
AD AND COPEI USED US ADVISORS IN 1973, AND THE EMBASSY DOES
NOT EXPECT THEIR PRESENCE HERE TO GENERATE ANY SERIOUS
CRITICISM.

11. THE LEFT -NOTHING RIGHT.
IN ESSENCE, THE EMBASSY HAS LITTLE TO ADD TO ITS REPORT ON
THE LEFTIST PARTIES OF MARCH 1 (CARACAS A-19). THEY REMAIN
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RIDDLED BY INERNAL FACTIONALISM, AND ARE NO MORE UNIFIED
TODAY THAN TWO MONTHS AGO. TOGETHER, THEY COULD CONCEIVABLY

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OBTAIN A LITTLE MORE THAN 10 PERCENT OF THE VOTE, BUT FEW
BELEIVE THAT MAS IS NOW CAPABLE OF RUNNING AN EFFECTIVE
CAMPAIGN, AND NONE OF THE LEFTIST PARTIES CAN AGREE ON EITHER
A COMMON PROGRAM NOR PLATFORM AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL (ALTHOUGH
THEY DID SO AT THE STATE LEVEL INCOJEDES LAST WEEK). THEY
WILL NOT DISAPPEAR, AND COULD PROVE A DECISIVE ELEMENT IN
A VERY CLOSE RACE, BUT HAVE LITTLE APPEAL TO THE POPULACE.
IN FACT, HECTOR MUJICA, THE RATHER OUTSPOKEN COMMUNIST PARTY
CANDIDATE HAS ADMITTED INALL CANDOR THAT HE HAS NO CHANCE
OF WINNING THIS TIME, A RATHER REFRESHING STATEMENT GIVEN
THE USUAL CAMPAIGN RHETORIC OF THE LEFTIST CANDIDATES.

12. COMMENT: NEITHER MAJOR PARTY CANDIDATE HAS CAUGHT THE
PUBLIC IMAGINATION. ARRIA IN THIS RESPECT IS A FRESH,
APPEALING FACE, BUT HE LACKS BOTH PARTY ORGANIZATION AND A
CLEAN RECORD FOR HE IS WIDELY PERCEIVED AS AN OPPORTUNIST.
THE LEFT IS DIVIDED AND VENEZUELA, WITH ITS RELATIVE WEALTH,
IS SIMPLY NOT READY FOR RADICAL APPEALS. THUS THE RACE SHAPES
UP IN THE CLASSICAL MANNER, AD USING IT S MASSIVE MACHINE
BASED ON THE SUPPORT OF THE LOWER CLASSES, COPEI APPEALING
TO ITS MIDDLE-CLASS PROFESSIONALS BUT SEEKING BROADER
SUPPORT, AND THERE IS A CARACAS-BASED INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE
ATTEMPTING A MEDIA BLITZ TO BECOME A MAJOR FORCE. SIMPLY
PUT, IT APPEARS THAT AD HAS THE LEAD, GIVEN THE ORGANIZATIONAL
MUSCLE AND FINANCING IT POSSESSES, BUT NOT BY MUCH.
SUBSTANTIAL DISAFFECTION WITH THE PEREZ GOVERNMENT PLUS THE
LACKLUSTER PERSONALITY OF PINERUA ARE HERRERA'S BEST WEAPONS.
BUT HERRERA HAS YET TO PROJECT HIMSELF AS THE VALID LEADER
OF THIS COUNTRY. FINALLY, ARRIA, USING MODERN TECHNIQUES,
HOPES TO MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE.
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Review Release Event: n/a
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Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2796563
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CAMPAIGN \'78: THE FIRST FURLONG
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PGOV, VE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ddef98a4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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